

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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Fred:



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Bob

NSC Declassification Review [EO 13526]
DECLASSIFY IN PART
by John Powers on 2/15/2018

Department of State, A/GIS/IPS/SRP
Change to _____
() Release () Excise () Deny () ☒ Declassify
Exemptions b () () E.O. 13526 25x () ()
Declassify after _____
With concurrence of: _____
_____ obtained _____ not obt.
IPS by DRB Date 9-15-08

CONFIDENTIAL-XGDS April 1, 1977

NOTES - Mrs. Derian's Visit to Argentina

Following points of information were gathered concerning activities of International Committee of the Red Cross in Argentina:

- a) ICRC was established with a resident office in Buenos Aires in January 1977. Prior to that time ICRC officials had visited. At present we understand that there are about 8 Swiss officials and about 10 Argentinians on the staff. The Swiss include 3 medical doctors.
- b) ICRC has no legally-recognized status in Argentina, or international mandate to investigate prison facilities, etc. It is here on sufferance of GOA, which has complete legal right to refuse it status. So far it has been permitted to oversee some 25 prison facilities in which persons considered "subversives" are detained. It has been barred only from Cordoba Province, apparently because General Menendez refuses to permit their visits.
- c) There are about 4,250 "political" detainees in the prisons open to the ICRC. These persons are registered, and can be visited by ICRC officers although they may not in some cases receive visits from others. There are about 500 to 600 more detainees in Cordoba, for a round figure of about 5000 "political" detainees acknowledged by the GOA to be in Argentina. Numbers of others detained in facilities not open to or known to ICRC cannot be estimated.
- d) ICRC has complete access in the 25 prisons, both to physical facilities and to prisoners. It may conduct private interviews with prisoners. We understand that ICRC has found physical conditions in these open prisons (to it, that is), adequate, and has found no evidence of physical abuse of prisoners interned there. There is evidence that prisoners have been abused before reaching the regular prisons, however. Psychological pressures on detainees are severe, and may be designed to
- e) ICRC has been able to assist some families in locating prisoners, and to carry information concerning welfare, etc., between prisoners and families. If requests containing detailed information on missing or detained persons are sent to ICRC in Geneva, it will attempt to locate them.
- f) ICRC has been urging GOA to allow it to expand its role and to visit a wider range of facilities. GOA has been helpful in some areas, but ICRC reportedly may consider leaving Argentina if it cannot be assured proper access, for example to Cordoba and to suspected detention facilities on military bases, etc. Individual staff members of ICRC have been harassed from time to time by suspected members of security forces or rightist critics, but haven't been physically attacked. On other hand, prison and other local authorities have been remarkably cooperative once they have gained full understanding of status and purpose of ICRC.

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Box 19

Denian visit - August 1977